

Hobbies

When big bills are worth more than their face value

By Roger Boye

Today's column answers questions about coins and paper money.

Q—We inherited a \$500 bill dated 1934-A from my mother's estate. But a bank teller told me the government declared all such bills worthless. Is that true?

L. K., Chicago

A—No. In 1969 Uncle Sam stopped issuing large-denomination bills (\$500 and up) and asked banks to turn in their supplies. However, all such currency remains "legal tender," and many varieties sell at a premium on the hobby market. Crisp, uncirculated specimens of the type you own might retail for as much as \$700, according to catalogues.

Q—I have a 1967 dime that's made of pure copper! Is it rare?

P. W., Merrillville, Ind.

A—Probably not. Most

likely, someone spread an acid on the outside layers of your clad dime, exposing the pure copper core. Or perhaps your coin was plated with copper. Either way, the item would have no special value on the hobby market.

If the outside layers somehow fell off the copper core during the minting process, your dime might retail for as much as \$35, according to author Alan Herbert. The designs on such error coins usually are grossly distorted.

You should have a dealer examine your piece for an expert appraisal.

Q—I've heard that 1964 Kennedy half dollars are special. Why is that?

I. P., Chicago

A—They're "special" only because each coin contains .36 of an ounce of silver, worth about \$2 at current commodity prices. Circulated specimens have no additional value as collectibles.

Stamps that recall the most famous mutiny

By Dominic Sama

Perhaps the most famous mutiny on the high seas was the takeover of the English ship *Bounty* in 1789 by its crew in the South Pacific. This criminal act, which was punishable by death, has been memorialized and romanticized in print, film and—for more than 50 years—on stamps, particularly from Pitcairn Island, where the mutineers settled.

Pitcairn, which still claims descendants of the mutineers, celebrated the 200th anniversary of the mutiny on Friday with three 90-cent commemoratives and three souvenir sheets. One sheet has six 90-cent stamps, another has six 20-cent stamps and a third has four 90-cent stamps.

In addition, the Isle of Man in the Irish Sea and Norfolk Island in the South Pacific joined the bicentennial with commemoratives on the same day.

Isle of Man issued stamps in values of 13, 16, 30, 32 and 35 pence, and a souvenir sheet with stamps of 23, 27 and 35 pence. Norfolk's commemoratives are stamps of 5, 39 and 42 cents and

\$1, and a souvenir sheet with stamps of 39 and 90 cents and \$1.

The stamp designs show assorted scenes of the *Bounty* and its voyage—the crew gathering breadfruit, Tahitians, a map of the mutineer's journey, and the confrontation between the leader of the mutiny, Fletcher Christian, and the ship's commander, Lt. William Bligh.

pence.

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Denmark, Finland and Iceland issued their annual Nordic commemoratives last week with the design theme of folk costumes.

Denmark's two commemoratives depict a woman from Valby selling dairy products at a street stand, 3.20 kroner, and a butcher waiting for customers in his shop, 4.40 kroner.

Finland's stamps depict a man playing an accordion and dressed in a costume from the southwestern part of the country, 1.90 markka, and a woman by a lake, in the attire of western Finland, 2.50 markka.

Iceland's stamps depict a woman in dress costume, 21 kronur, and in everyday costume, 26 kronur.

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